

FALL/WINTER 2022

# GUARD DETAIL

A CHRONICLE OF THE MISSISSIPPI ARMY AND AIR NATIONAL GUARD



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**COVER PHOTO:** Graphic Representation designed by Albert & Robinson Architects, PLLC of Hattiesburg, Mississippi.

# Letter From THE EDITOR THE TALENT IN TEAMS



*"Talent wins games but teamwork and intelligence wins championships."*

~ Michael Jordan

It's long been said that "The Guard Is Family" (TGIF) and "Greatness Rises In Teams" (GRIT). It's also understood that everyone comes with different talents, skills, and contributions to ensure the team and the organization are successful. It takes all of us together to ensure the continued success of the diverse and challenging missions the National Guard is notorious for, from natural disaster response to missions protecting our national security.

Our military lineage is built on the diversity of our teams with various levels of experience. Our seal's symbolism tells the story and identifies where we have been and where we are going. Our military customs, traditions, uniforms, patches, and awards tell our personal story. Every detail from our rank, badges of accomplishments, professional military education schools that earn our Soldiers and Airmen their specific Military Occupational Specialties, and the rank on our uniform provide visual information that symbolize the capabilities, responsibilities, and successes of military service members.

Our greatest resource is our personnel, both military and civilian. Each person comes to the table with a different set of tools offering valuable contributions and ensuring success at every level of our organization. Our job

as leaders is to ensure that we guide and mentor the next generation of leaders with the appropriate professional military educational opportunities, while guiding them to key development assignments that challenge their skillset and help to advance the organization's internal capabilities.

As professionals, I encourage you to consistently seek self-improvement in your personal and professional life. Be knowledgeable about the opportunities available to you. Continue to pursue your civilian education as well as your professional military education. Consistently work to develop your plans for the future. Do what is expected of you, then strive to exceed those expectations, especially the expectations you place on yourself. Always remember, bettering yourself better the team.

Members of the Mississippi National Guard continue to set the standard for exemplary service to our state and nation. I am constantly reminded of the superior dedication and unwavering patriotism expressed by our service members and their families living in every county in this great state. The Mississippi National Guard shone brightly during recent events such as the Changes of Command for Camp McCain Training Center, as they welcomed Col. Joy Alexander and said a fond farewell to Col. Guy Reedy, and Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center, welcoming Col. Lee Henry and bidding farewell to Col. Rick Weaver.

The Recruiting and Retention Battalion continues to strive for excellence, opening a new store-front recruiting office in Ridgeland to ensure the next greatest generation has every opportunity to join our team. The men and women of the Mississippi National Guard are always ready to meet and exceed expectations at every opportunity.

I encourage you to continue challenging yourself and your team to meet goals personally and professionally. Each one of us has a voice to inspire, encourage, celebrate achievement, and stand with our brothers and sisters in the Mississippi National Guard as we use our resources and talents to grow the team. Thank you, Mississippi National Guard Soldiers, Airmen and Families, for your devotion to duty and continued exemplary service supporting our great State and Nation!

Lt. Col. Deidre D. Smith  
Editor-in-Chief

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Maj. Gen. Janson D. Boyles



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## Colonel Joy Alexander

One of Gen. Dwight Eisenhower's favorite maxims was, "There's no such thing as an indispensable man or woman." While I clearly understand the point Eisenhower was making with such a statement, that there are plenty of men and women capable of replacing another in a needed role, this is not the mentality we should have when it comes to retaining our new and mid-career service members. Instead, we should understand that everyone adds value to our organization.

From the moment a service member completes initial training, they are considered an asset to their respective branch. As they gain more training and experience, their importance increases due to the high quality of skills they acquire and the wealth of knowledge they gain. It takes time to grow a highly skilled and proficient Soldier or Airman. Yet, we continue to experience losses of this valuable resource.

Once the initial obligation is complete, service members are asked to continue serving for an additional period. This process ideally continues for the length of an entire career of twenty years or more. Understandably, there are many reasons why Soldiers decide to leave. Some are justifiable and make sense... better job, hardships, relocation, health, etc. Others do not. For example, boredom.

Recruiters do a phenomenal job keeping our ranks filled with new trainees. However, if we pause and look at the tradeoff, you can clearly see the gap in experience we are perpetually attempting to fill. Mid-career personnel are not only difficult to quickly replace, but their absence also directly impacts the readiness of our organization.

So how do we get better at retaining this group within our units?

1. Create exceptional training opportunities and experiences. Make time together relevant and meaningful for your teams, squads, platoons, etc.

2. Build a unit culture your men and women want to be a part of. It is human nature to want to belong to something bigger than ourselves, something meaningful where we feel like an important part of the whole.

3. Provide opportunities for professional development. Counseling your personnel on career planning and expectations can help them set goals and put these goals to an achievable timeline. Soldiers tend to be encouraged by a leader's interest in their professional development.

4. Offer incentives. It is hard for a leader to understand the challenges their Soldiers may have at home, or work, unless they are talking to them on a regular basis. Incentives are a great motivator. Recognize Soldiers in front of the formation – a pat on the back can go a long way in making members feel needed.

Another popular maxim of Eisenhower's was, "Let's not make our mistakes in a hurry." Sometimes we need to take a pause to think about important decisions we are faced with making. Retired Brig. Gen. Tim Herrington once told me, "If you ever feel like you want to get out of the military, stick around for one year and see if you still want to leave the service." Great advice from someone I deeply admire. It has worked for me personally and combinations of all the above have enabled me to successfully retain a Soldier or two within our organization. I challenge you to add these ideas and recommendations to your toolbox and do the same.

**Col. Joy Alexander**  
Commander, Camp McCain Training Center  
Mississippi Army National Guard

# CHAPLAIN'S CORNER



Who is the greatest running back in the history of the NFL? Objectively speaking, there is only one all-time rushing leader: Emmitt Smith. Rushing for 18,355 yards over his 15-year career, and averaging 4.2 yards per carry, Smith was knocked down more than 4,300 times. How does one become the most successful running back in the history of the NFL? You keep getting back up when you get knocked down!

That is how anyone becomes successful in life as well. Numerous circumstances can knock us down from time to time: relationship issues, financial difficulties, the death of someone close to us, career setbacks and more. No one is immune to these life challenges. Some don't know how to respond to these setbacks while others manage to pick themselves up, get back in the game and press on, often using these setbacks as motivation and opportunities to better themselves.

Resilience is the ability to grow and thrive in the face of challenges and bounce back from adversity. According to AR 350-53 Comprehensive Soldier and Family Fitness, there are five dimensions of strength that increase our resilience and enable us to get back up when life knocks us down.

First, there is the physical dimension, which speaks to the strong connection between our physical health and our mental health. Those who exercise regularly and take care of themselves physically tend to be better able to adapt to adversity and manage the physiological issues which often accompany stress.

Those individuals who tend to be optimistic and can exercise emotional self-control are also

better able to handle adversity in life. This is an aspect of the emotional dimension which increases resiliency. Emotionally strong people look for ways to turn setbacks into opportunities. Stress becomes a motivator to help them achieve more; something to be embraced rather than avoided.

The social and family dimensions are very similar. Service members who have deep, meaningful relationships have a built-in support system that encourages them and helps them overcome adversity. On every play of his career, Smith had teammates who blocked for him, attempted to protect him, and were always there to help him up when he was knocked down.

As a chaplain, the aspect of resiliency that most interests me is the spiritual dimension. Believing God created me and has a plan for my life provides a sense of identity that gives me strength in adversity. I believe that even in the bad circumstances of life, God is at work to bring about something good that has the purpose of making me better. This belief gives me an inner peace and the courage to get back up as I face challenges that knock me down.

You can be certain that there will be times when life "knocks you down," but my prayer for each of you reading this is that you will not let it keep you down. A fitness coach friend of mine reminds me regularly that there are only two things in this life we control: our attitude and our effort. May we each give our best in both to keep getting up and pressing on.

**Chaplain (Lt. Col.) Jason Bird**  
66th Troop Command



# SNAPSHOTS



An M109A6 Paladin Self-Propelled Howitzer sits at the entrance of the Mississippi State Fairgrounds in Jackson, Mississippi, Oct. 6, 2022. The Mississippi Army National Guard set up tables at the fair to discuss career options with patrons. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Connie Jones)





# MATES GROUNDBREAKING

Story by Lt. Col. Deidre D. Smith  
MSNG Director of Public Affairs

Maj. Gen. Janson D. Boyles, adjutant general of Mississippi, in coordination with U.S. Congressman Steven Palazzo, hosted a groundbreaking ceremony to celebrate the approved expansion of the Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center's Maneuver Area Training Equipment Site (MATES) Friday, Oct. 14, 2022.

"Mississippi has a great reputation nationally, especially with the active-duty force, about the kind of work we do here," said Boyles. "We have a lot of talent here, but we need a building to match the talent, and that's what we're celebrating today."

The Mississippi National Guard's MATES facility is a premier strategic military asset for the state and an instrumental military force multiplier for the nation. The MATES is responsible for the maintenance, repair, and overhaul of more than 1,000 pieces of equipment for National Guard units in Alabama, Tennessee, and Mississippi.

The original facility was established in 1984 to provide expert repair, equipment staging, and sustained equipment lifecycle maintenance for an elite package



Col. Bobby Ginn (left), Mississippi Army National Guard Director of Logistics (G4) and Col. Rick Weaver, commander of Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center, present U.S. Congressman Steven Palazzo with a plaque during the groundbreaking ceremony at Camp Shelby, Mississippi, Oct. 14, 2022. The approved expansion will provide over 52,000 square feet to meet timely mission requirements for precision, sustainment, and readiness in theater operations around the globe. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by 2nd Lt. Desmond Jones)

of military vehicles including Bradley Fighting Vehicle Systems, Abrams battle tanks, Paladin Howitzers, Nuclear Biological Chemical Reconnaissance Vehicles and Engineer heavy equipment used for construction, route clearance, and the transportation of combat engineers on the battlefield.

Palazzo, representing Mississippi's 4th Congressional District, was instrumental in moving this project forward from a needed resource to a reality, by securing federal funds in the sum of approximately \$15.5 million.

"The money was well spent because it's going to help with basically providing

for our national security," said Palazzo. "It's also going to attract new units to come here to Camp Shelby, Mississippi, which means we're going to create even more jobs."

The MATES facility at Camp Shelby plays an important part in sustaining today's warfighter for tomorrow's missions. As warfighters face new missions, the military equipment is adapted and modernized, then fielded to the force for use on diverse and challenging battlefields.

"The new vehicles that are coming in, you've got to be able to operate them differently than we do in the current facility," said Col. Rick Weaver, commander of Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center. "The expansion is going to allow us additional square footage and height to complete the required repairs on new equipment."

In total, the MATES facility at Camp Shelby has successfully supported the repair of more than 10,000 pieces of equipment while saving taxpayers over

\$2.4 million in equipment sustainability and repair costs. The new renovations will provide more than 52,000 square feet of operational space to support timely and precise maintenance requirements. The MATES expansion project will provide vital maintenance and repair support to two Heavy Brigade Combat Teams ensuring today's warfighters have the reliable equipment to sustain critical movement in theaters of operation around the world.



Graphic Representation of the 52,000 square-foot maintenance facility courtesy of Albert & Robinson Architects, PLLC of Hattiesburg, Mississippi.

# CAMP MCCAIN CHANGE OF COMMAND

Story by Staff Sgt. Connie Jones  
JFH-MS Public Affairs Office

The Mississippi National Guard hosted a change of command ceremony at Camp McCain Training Center, August 13, 2022.

The change of command ceremony celebrates the accomplishments of the outgoing commander and welcomes the incoming commander as the new, most senior-ranking officer of the installation. The simple, yet traditional event signifies a total transfer of responsibility, authority, and accountability of the training center, operations, and personnel of the command.

Col. Millard “Guy” Reedy IV relinquished command of Camp McCain Training Center to Col. Joy L. Alexander during the ceremony. Maj. Gen. Janson D. Boyles, the adjutant general of Mississippi, was the keynote speaker for the event and reflected on his previous experiences with Reedy, emphasizing how proud he is of the outgoing commander’s accomplishments during his tenure.

“Guy, thank you for the great work you’ve done here at Camp McCain,” said Boyles. “You’ve made this mission a success.”

Boyles, speaking to Alexander, reiterated his faith in her abilities during his speech.

“You will do a great job here,” said Boyles. “Because of your leadership and experience, I know you will continue to ensure that this training ground will serve Soldiers well.”

During the ceremony, Reedy was awarded the Mississippi Magnolia Medal and The Maj. Gen. H. Pickney McCain Distinguished Award of Merit for exceptional and meritorious service as commander of Camp McCain. He was also presented with additional awards from leaders of Camp McCain.

“I can honestly say I’ve never had more fun being in a unit than being here at Camp McCain,” said Reedy. “I’ve truly been enjoying the people and loving the part where I got to be the face of the Mississippi National Guard, welcoming all the out-of-state units coming here to train. I will miss my family here at Camp McCain very much.”

Alexander, a Perkinston native, is the first female commander of Camp McCain in its more than 80-year history.

“General Boyles, I promise I will give it my best to maintain the culture of Camp McCain and enhance and capitalize on what’s already here and already works and make it even better,” said Alexander. “Thank you for the opportunity.”



Maj. Gen. Janson D. Boyles, the adjutant general of Mississippi, hands Camp McCain Training Center's unit colors to Col. Joy Alexander, incoming commander of CMTC, during a change of command ceremony, Aug. 13, 2022. This longstanding tradition is how the adjutant general shows his trust and confidence in the incoming commander. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Connie Jones)



Maj. Gen. Janson D. Boyles, the adjutant general of Mississippi, pins the Mississippi Magnolia Medal on Col. Guy Reedy, outgoing commander of Camp McCain Training Center (CMTC), during a change of command ceremony at CMTC, Aug. 13, 2022. Reedy earned the award for his outstanding service while in command of Camp McCain. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Connie Jones)



An “elfscort” helps a Salvation Army Angel Tree child with a building activity during the Flight to the North Pole at the 172nd Airlift Wing, Jackson, Mississippi, Dec. 13, 2022. Flight to the North Pole is an annual community outreach event benefiting the Salvation Army Angel Tree program, hosted by the 172nd Airlift Wing, Jackson Mississippi Metro Area Salvation Army and local volunteers. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Airman 1st Class Shardae McAfee)

## 172ND AIRLIFT WING HOSTS 16TH ANNUAL FLIGHT TO THE NORTH POLE

Story by Airman 1st Class Shardae McAfee  
172nd Airlift Wing Public Affairs Office

Members of the 172nd Airlift Wing partnered with the Jackson Metro Area Salvation Army and the Y101 radio station to host the 16th annual Flight to the North Pole, a community outreach event benefiting the Salvation Army Angel Tree program, Dec. 13, 2022.

The annual event brings together local leaders, sponsors, supporters and over 100 volunteers in the spirit of delivering a magical Christmas to underprivileged families.

“The kids are just so surprised and probably shocked that they were able to get such wonderful quality gifts, and that’s because we have such a generous community,” said Maj. Bill Shafer, Salvation Army Corps officer and pastor for the Jackson-Metro area.

The 172nd Airlift Wing leadership understands the importance of community involvement and the impact of the Flight to the North Pole.

“It’s something that we do as a Wing to help people in our community,” said Col. Britt Watson, 172nd Airlift Wing commander.

Watson said the community is usually aware of the Mississippi Air National Guard’s involvement in events such as natural disasters, but some may not be aware of the Air Guard’s commitment to their communities.

“We’re not just a military organization; we are part of the community,” said Watson. “That means we give back to our community, and the Flight to the North Pole is an opportunity for us to do that.” The Angel Tree program, organized under Salvation Army’s Social Services Department, is designed to assist families who are at a disadvantage during the holiday season.

“We’re built on service and helping those in need by doing the most good,” said Rolonda Alexander, Social Services Director for the Salvation Army – Jackson Metro Area. “The Salvation Army Angel Tree Program gives hope to families and provides them with an opportunity to

give their children a magical Christmas.” Shafer added that the Flight to the North Pole concluded with joyful hearts and happy faces for everyone involved.

“The magic of touching lives goes beyond giving gifts,” said Shafer. “It also enriches the lives of volunteers who go home with an experience that they share with their families and friends.”

Watson believes these selfless acts of service also bring forth a sense of fulfillment in serving the community.

“There’s a little extra pride that you have as the Wing Commander, because it’s not just us serving,” said Watson. “It’s your entire Wing that you’re leading; you’re getting to see the best of your organization.”

The community’s holiday cheer at Flight to the North Pole welcomed expressions of gratitude and joy.

“Everybody feels something special by being connected to it,” said Shafer. “We give all glory to God, and we’re so blessed for this partnership, and hope that it continues for many, many years.”

# CELEBRATING VETERANS PAST & PRESENT

Story by Staff Sgt. Connie Jones  
JFH-MS Public Affairs Office

*"A hero is someone who has given his or her life to something bigger than oneself."* – Joseph Campbell

Every year, our Nation celebrates Veterans Nov. 11, honoring those who chose to commit themselves to protecting and serving their country for the freedoms that are enjoyed nationally.

There were several celebrations happening across Mississippi during the week of Veteran's Day 2022. The celebration began with the Mississippi National Guard (MSNG) Retiree

Day at the Mississippi Armed Forces Museum (MAFM) at Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center, Nov. 9. Retiree Day allows retired Veterans from Mississippi to receive an update on the status of the MSNG, access to military resources and benefits they may need, and a chance for fellowship with other Veterans. Col. Rick Weaver, commander of Camp Shelby, welcomed visitors to the base and Miss Mississippi 2022 Emmie Perkins sang the National Anthem to kick off the event. Maj. Gen. Janson D. Boyles, the adjutant general of Mississippi, provided the status of the MSNG to the audience as the keynote speaker.

"We had about 300 of our retirees come out," said Weaver. "We're walking among legends at this point. Everyone who has fought or worked to get the Mississippi National Guard to where it is right now, that's what Retiree Day is about."

On Nov. 10, the MSNG joined the Mississippi Department of Archives and History, Mississippi Veterans Affairs, the Mississippi War Veterans Memorial Commission, and the Daughters of the American Revolution at the Two Mississippi Museums in Jackson, to honor Mississippians who have served in the U.S. Armed Forces. Each year the ceremony focuses on one

Veteran, usually someone who has passed, and this year the late Brig. Gen. Martha Jo Leslie was honored with a memorial and wreath laying. Following the event, Boyles and Chief Warrant Officer 5 Donny Dukes, command chief warrant officer of the Mississippi Army National Guard, participated in interviews with Gerard Gilbert of SuperTalk Mississippi to speak about the event as well as Veteran's Day.

"I am who I am in the military because of the men and women that came before me," said Boyles. "They were an example. They mentored me and encouraged me when I needed encouragement. We need to remember the contribution they've made to our peace and security. We need to recognize their service and sacrifice."

Weaver and Tommy Lofton, MAFM director, also spoke on air with SuperTalk Eagle Hour as they hosted a special episode at Camp Shelby, Nov. 11, 2022. The two spoke about the events of Veteran's week, including the unveiling of a bust honoring Lance Cpl. Casey Casanova, the first female Mississippian killed in action in Iraq. The sculpture, as well as a display of Casanova's uniforms and equipment, was presented during a ceremony at the museum Nov. 10 – the 247th Marine Corps birthday.

"Yesterday, we had the chance to dedicate her exhibit and unveil a bust that a gentleman named Cliff Leonard from Florida created," said Lofton. "It's the first female bust he's made. It's a huge honor for us to be able to tell Casey's story here."

The 186th Air Refueling Wing and the Mississippi Army National Guard Recruiting and Retention Battalion were proud to be a part of the Military Appreciation game held at Mississippi State University's Davis Wade Stadium Nov. 12. They were given a chance to walk onto the field to be celebrated during the game.

To the Veterans of the State and Nation, thank you for your service.



Brig. Gen. Joe D. Hargett, director of joint staff for the Mississippi National Guard, speaks with a retired service member during the annual MSNG Retiree Day at the Mississippi Armed Forces Museum, Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center, Mississippi, Nov. 9, 2022. Retiree Day is held to honor and celebrate the service and sacrifice of retired Mississippi service members and their families. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by 2nd Lt. Desmond Jones)



Command Chief Warrant Officer 5 Donny Dukes, command chief warrant officer of the Mississippi Army National Guard, joins Gerard Gilbert from SuperTalk Mississippi for a live interview at the Two Mississippi Museums in Jackson, Mississippi, Nov. 10, 2022. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Bill Valentine)



Emmie Perkins, Miss Mississippi 2022, sings the National Anthem during the annual Mississippi National Guard Retiree Day at the Mississippi Armed Forces Museum, Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center, Mississippi, Nov. 9, 2022. Retiree Day is held to honor and celebrate the service and sacrifice of retired Mississippi service members and their families. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by 2nd Lt. Desmond Jones)

Airmen with the 186th Air Refueling Wing, Mississippi Air National Guard, walk onto the field during a military appreciation football game at Mississippi State University, Nov. 12, 2022. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Tech. Sgt. Justin Brown)



# 172ND AIRLIFT WING CONDUCTS READINESS EXERCISE

Story by Airman 1st Class Sharda McAfee  
172nd Airlift Wing Public Affairs Office  
Tech. Sgt. Vanessa Rivera  
U.S. Air Force Air Mobility Command

Airmen from the 172nd Airlift Wing participated in a large-scale readiness exercise (LRE) Jan. 27-29, 2023, in Jackson. The exercise tested the Wing's ability to operate in a deployed environment under various levels of threats.

"The LRE is a comprehensive appraisal of the readiness of the Wing," said Lt. Col. Wyatt Rives, 172nd Airlift Wing's Inspector General. "This event was an opportunity for our Airmen to work alongside each other while working towards the common goal of preparation and readiness."

More than 70 inspectors from Air Mobility Command (AMC) and the Wing Inspection Team observed and evaluated the Airmen in each career field while they responded to scenario injects over the three days.

"We're conducting this readiness exercise so that we can train to be ready for a deployment," said Col. Britt Watson, 172nd Airlift Wing commander. "We're going to see how our Airmen handle a contested environment, whether that's losing power, attacks from the ground, missiles, or being able to get in and out of chemical protective gear."

Airmen were evaluated on multiple scenarios such as their ability to defend the base, deploy aircraft under fire, handle breach of security, and perform duties while wearing Mission Oriented Protective Posture (MOPP) gear.

"The purpose of the exercise is to assess the current state of readiness of our Wing," said Capt. Roger Wade, 172nd Airlift Wing Director of Inspections for the Inspector General's Office. "The one key component tested was mobility under fire because it is a concept that projects forward to the next fight."

Unit effectiveness was challenged as Airmen faced a rigorous, robust schedule of operating in limited conditions without



Capt. Justin Hill, a pilot assigned to the 183rd Airlift Squadron, receives an aircrew eye and respiratory protection system check as he goes through a simulated decontamination line during a large-scale readiness exercise in Jackson, Mississippi, Jan. 28, 2022. The AERPS equipment consists of a rubber mask, multiple layers of boots and gloves, fan filter system and an audio and speaker system, which is uniquely designed for aircrew members working in contaminated environments. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by 1st Lt. Kiara Spann)



U.S. Airmen assigned to the 172nd Security Forces Squadron, stop protesters from gaining entry to the base as part of a simulated protest at the front gate, Jan. 28, 2023 in Jackson, Mississippi. This simulated protest was part of a large-scale readiness exercise to test the capabilities of Mississippi Air National Guard Airmen in a contested environment. (U.S. Air Force photo by Tech. Sgt. Vanessa Rivera)

everyday luxuries to help determine how they would approach war.

Rives said the event proved to be a successful exercise because a significant portion of the base, covering many career fields and skillsets, were tested in this integrated training environment. Smaller-scale yearly training events with different objectives prepare Airmen for collective base-wide training to support mission readiness.

Wade said the large-scale readiness

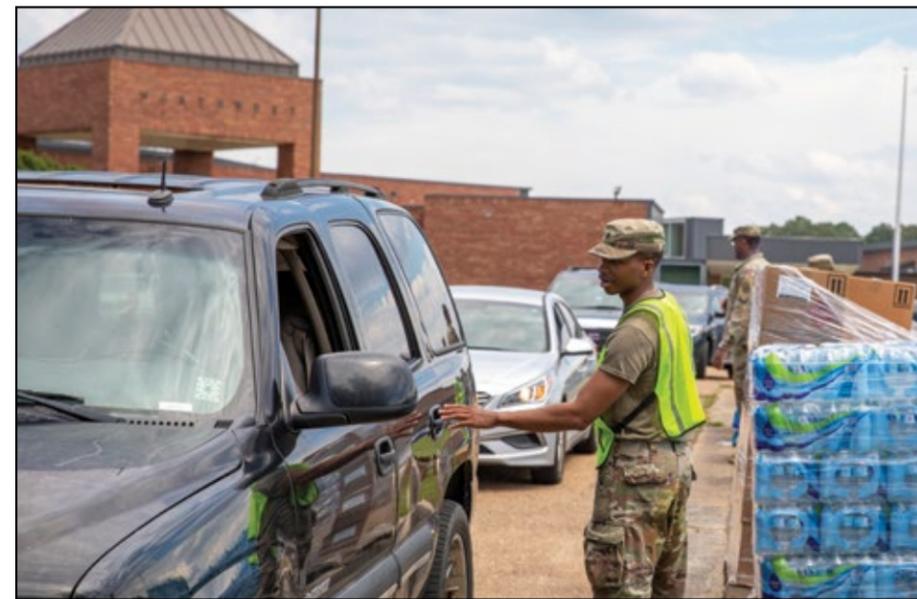
exercises build confidence among great Airmen at every level who are eager and ready to take initiative and complete the mission. Readiness exercises continue to strengthen the Wing's mission to constantly improve combat capability to defend our nation and support our state.

"The biggest takeaway is the idea that the exercise has utility," said Wade. "It's going to set you up for success in the future fight. If you're not looking toward that future fight, then this is just a game."

# JACKSON WATER CRISIS



Lt. Col. Rodney Hodge, commander of the 298th Support Battalion, Mississippi Army National Guard, speaks with Maj. Gen. Janson D. Boyles, the adjutant general of Mississippi, at the Smith-Wills Stadium in Jackson, Mississippi, Sept. 2, 2022. Nearly 600 Mississippi National Guardsmen were set up across seven sites in Jackson for people to collect bottled water, hand sanitizer and non-potable water from bulk water trucks. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Connie Jones)



A Mississippi National Guard Soldier prepares to distribute water at Northwest Jackson Middle School in Jackson, Mississippi, Sept. 2, 2022. The points of distribution consisted of seven sites in Jackson for people to collect bottled water, hand sanitizer and non-potable water from bulk water trucks. Nearly 20,000 cars received water on the first day of the operation. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Connie Jones)

Story by Staff Sgt. Connie Jones  
JFH-MS Public Affairs Office

The city of Jackson faced an internationally recognized water crisis beginning in August 2022. To assist the community, a coalition of state leadership was formed to react on a large scale – Mayor Chokwe Antar Lumumba, the mayor of Jackson, Gov. Tate Reeves, and several local government departments including the Mississippi National Guard.

The Mississippi National Guard deployed to distribute water and hand sanitizer throughout the state's capital region Sept. 1, 2022.

"I am bringing Soldiers and Airmen from all over the state," said Maj. Gen. Janson D. Boyles, the adjutant general of Mississippi. "More than 600 men and women will be on the POD [point of distribution] sites helping to distribute water."

These Soldiers and Airmen worked tirelessly across seven different distribution sites to provide water to the citizens of Jackson and the surrounding areas affected by the water crisis. Teams worked in shifts to hand out water, hand sanitizer, and positive energy to everyone who needed it. The mission was personal for Lt. Col. Rodney M. Hodge, a Jackson native and joint task force commander of the water distribution mission.

"I'm originally from Jackson, born and raised," he said. "I grew up in Shady Oaks. It really feels good to be able to come home and do something for the community."

Overall, approximately 11 million bottles of water were distributed from September 1 to September 15.

"I'm proud of my Soldiers, they've been executing the mission pretty well," said Hodge. "They've been taking care of the community so I couldn't ask for anything more."



# 172ND RESOURCE PROTECTION TEAM: THE QUIET COMPLEMENT

Members of the 172nd Airlift Wing Resource Protection Team, Mississippi Air National Guard, qualified on the M18 pistol and M4 rifle at the Combat Readiness Training Center, Gulfport, Mississippi, Dec. 6, 2022. The 172nd RPT is a volunteer force, drawn from shops across the base, comprised of trained multi-capable augmentees to the 172nd Security Forces Squadron. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Airman 1st Class Shardae McAfee)

Story by Staff Sgt. Jared Bounds and Airman 1st Class Shardae McAfee  
172nd Airlift Wing Public Affairs Office

The 172nd Resource Protection Team (RPT), a group of volunteers from various career fields and backgrounds from the 172nd Airlift Wing, Mississippi Air National Guard, conducted their annual firearms training and qualification at the Combat Readiness Training Center, Gulfport, in December 2022.

The global impact of the 172nd Airlift Wing's mission cannot be overstated. The 172nd RPT quietly augments the 172nd Security Forces Squadron in protecting the aircraft, infrastructure and Airmen that keep that mission going.

"We're a mixture of full-time members who can promptly support and defend the 172nd in contested environments or backfill deployed defenses as Security Forces Augmentees," said Senior Master Sgt. Shadford Herron, 172nd Aerospace Ground Equipment superintendent and 172nd RPT noncommissioned officer-in-charge. The RPT NCOIC is responsible for the rigorous, detailed training of each team member.

"We've got three squads that receive a lot of training," said Herron. "Things like annual M18 pistol and M4 rifle qualifications, clearing rooms and buildings for active shooter scenarios, protecting various resources like base infrastructure and aircraft, annual use of

force and application training, baton training and more."

Much of the training is administered by members of the 172nd Security Forces Squadron, putting into practice the multi-capable Airman philosophy of developing members into more lethal, well-rounded warfighters.

"They're probably one of my favorite groups to work with, because they're so eager to learn and really enjoy the training," said Tech. Sgt. Liana Bennett, a weapons instructor with the 172nd Security Forces Squadron. "We have the RPT to back us up; they are invaluable to us. We really do depend on them."

It takes a certain kind of Airman to step into the role of an RPT volunteer; someone you can depend on.

"You want someone who's full-time and who will answer the call, if needed," said 1st Lt. Chris Murray, 172nd Aircraft Maintenance Officer and RPT officer-in-charge. "We've never been called upon, but we stay sharp; it's best to have it and not need it, then to need it and not have it."

The 172nd RPT not only spreads a significant number of trained team members across the base, but it also draws Airmen from many different careers and backgrounds together.

"You're going to make friends in your squadron or your section," said Staff Sgt. Joseph Moore, a communications/navigation avionics specialist with the 172nd Maintenance Squadron and 172nd RPT member. "But how often do you really get to work with other people from other parts of the base?"

Moore said the 172nd RPT is like a cross-section of the 172nd Airlift Wing.

"It gives every member a chance to be a part of protecting the base," said Moore. "It's good to know I have so many people backing me up."

Herron called the 172nd Resource Protection Team the 172nd Airlift Wing's "best-kept secret."

"We don't do it for glory," said Herron. "It's an awesome responsibility to be able to serve behind the scenes and to know that there are members intertwined among us from multiple organizations on base who are trained and equipped to meet a threat when called upon."



Members of the 172nd Airlift Wing Resource Protection Team, Mississippi Air National Guard, qualified on the M18 pistol and M4 rifle at the Combat Readiness Training Center, Gulfport, Mississippi, Dec. 6, 2022. The 172nd RPT is a volunteer force, drawn from shops across the base, comprised of trained multi-capable augmentees to the 172nd Security Forces Squadron. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Jared Bounds)



Members of the 172nd Airlift Wing Resource Protection Team, Mississippi Air National Guard, qualified on the M18 pistol and M4 rifle at the Combat Readiness Training Center, Gulfport, Mississippi, Dec. 6, 2022. The 172nd RPT is a volunteer force, drawn from shops across the base, comprised of trained multi-capable augmentees to the 172nd Security Forces Squadron. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Jared Bounds)

**"IT'S GOOD TO KNOW I HAVE SO MANY PEOPLE BACKING ME UP."**

**- STAFF SGT. JOSEPH MOORE**

## MISSISSIPPI NATIONAL GUARD CELEBRATES NEW JUDGE



The Judge Advocate General's Corps, Mississippi Army National Guard, attends the promotion and investiture of Lawrence Austin, Sr., at Grenada County Court House, Grenada, Mississippi, Sept. 10, 2022. Austin was promoted to Colonel and invested as the Mississippi Military Judge amongst his family and friends. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Taylor Cleveland)

Story by Staff Sgt. Connie Jones  
JFH-MS Public Affairs Office

Family and friends attended the promotion and investiture of Col. Lawrence Austin, Sr. at the Grenada County Courthouse, Sept. 10, 2022.

Austin was promoted to the rank of colonel, taking his oath of office for his promotion from Maj. Gen. Janson D. Boyles, the adjutant general of Mississippi, and Austin's wife, Josephine Austin.

"I would just like to say that it's a great honor, not only to be granted this rank, but more so to have general Boyles here and my wife and children, and all the people that are here supporting me," Austin said.

He then took an oath of office from Judge Virginia Carlton, retired Army JAG officer and Presiding Judge of the Mississippi Court of Appeals, to become a Mississippi National Guard military judge. His children, Spc. Lawrence Austin, Jr. and Amanda Goodwin, donned his robe.

"I've known Col. Austin since 2007, and I am thrilled to see him extend to the bench today," Carlton said. "He will do a fine job as a military judge and I have full confidence in his judgment, his discretion and his ability to maintain good order and discipline, and uphold military justice."

"Lawrence made a commitment to come back here to Grenada and Camp McCain



Spc. Lawrence Austin, Jr. (left) and Amanda Goodwin, children of Lawrence Austin, Sr., remove the rank of lieutenant colonel from Austin during his promotion ceremony at Grenada County Court House, Grenada, Mississippi, Sept. 10, 2022. Austin is tasked with overseeing the Mississippi National Guard's Military Justice program and presiding over Courts Martial and administrative proceedings. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Taylor Cleveland)

and worked hard to connect the National Guard back into this community," Boyles said. "You have earned this new position and will do a great job in representing us as a military judge for the state of Mississippi and again, thank you for your service to our country and great nation."

Austin has a vast educational background. On the civilian side, he has a bachelor's degree in business administration from Delta State University, a juris doctor from Mississippi College School of Law and a master's degree of law in taxation from the University of Denver Graduate Tax Program. His military education includes the Command and General Staff College

Advanced Operations Course and Intermediate Level Education (Top 10% of class); the Judge Advocate Officer Basic and Advanced courses, and a host of other courses.

"Col. Austin was selected because of his experience and his aptitude," said Lt. Col. Robert Mayhue, Jr., joint staff judge advocate for the Mississippi National Guard. "He is very adept at collecting information and studying law and regulations. We felt Col. Austin would be a very natural fit based on his judge background. He's also been in judge advocate positions before, including deploying in that role. It was really an easy pick."

Story by Spc. Aaron Tomlinson  
102d Public Affairs Detachment  
Staff Sgt. Connie Jones  
JFH-MS Public Affairs Office

# MEDIC RANGER

Being a combat medic is no easy feat. Medics train in a variety of life-saving skills, spending 16 weeks incorporating classroom learning and hands-on simulated training. Ranger school isn't nearly as long but intense is an understatement. This infamously challenging school gives new meaning to mentally and physically tough.

Sgt. Wesley Byrd completed both.

Byrd, a medical instructor with the 5th Medical Battalion, 154th Regiment Regional Training Institute, Mississippi Army National Guard, began his military career in 2017. He went to basic training and learned quickly that he would need to improve his fitness.

"On my first [Army Physical Fitness Test], I failed the run," said Byrd. "I decided I would never fail again. [Physical Training] was something I worked at."

Following basic training, he went to Fort Sam Houston, Texas, for Combat Medic Advanced Individual Training. Although he originally wanted to be an aviator, he grew to enjoy being a medic, he said.

Byrd won the Mississippi National Guard State Best Warrior Competition in 2021. The intense competition is a physically and mentally challenging three-day competition that tests competitors on a variety of technical and tactical skills, including medical tasks.

"The 12-mile ruck march was probably one of the hardest rucks I've ever done in my life because we did an APFT right after," Byrd said. "It felt like we were beat up. Knees hurt, back hurt, everything was tight. Also, we were in our duty uniform. We didn't change into our [Army Physical Fitness Uniform]. So it was rough."

After his victory, Byrd was presented with a choice: any school offered by the U.S. Army. This could be a troubling decision for many, as the Army provides many different schools, but for Byrd the choice was easy: U.S. Army Ranger School.

"I've wanted to go to Ranger school since I joined, and I knew it was one of the harder things you could do in the Army and I just wanted to see if I could do it," he said.

Ranger School is one of the toughest training courses a Soldier can volunteer



Sgt. Wesley Byrd (center right), 154th Regiment Regional Training Institute, Mississippi Army National Guard, stands with members of his unit at his graduation from U.S. Army Ranger School at Fort Benning, Georgia, July 15, 2022. (Courtesy photo)



Sgt. Wesley Byrd, 154th Regiment Regional Training Institute, Mississippi Army National Guard, prepares to conduct the Sprint, Drag, Carry event of the Army Combat Fitness Test, Jan. 22, 2023. Byrd was competing in his unit's Best Warrior Competition. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Connie Jones)

for. Army Rangers are experts in leading Soldiers on difficult missions – and to do this, they need rigorous training. Traditional Guardsmen must attend a two-week Ranger Training Assessment course to ensure they are ready for the rigorous course at Fort Benning, Georgia. After a weekend break, Byrd began Ranger School. For more than two months, he trained to exhaustion, pushing the limits of his mind and body.

"The food and sleep deprivation was the toughest part," Byrd said. "It destroyed us mentally. It's almost impossible to be hungry and tired and still be a decent guy and there's no way to prepare for that. It's performing at a high level of stress."

Facing the grueling course gave him personal insight he may not have realized had he not pushed himself beyond his limits.

"I learned that I had to work consistently to develop a good work ethic," said Byrd. "I also learned that I was capable of more

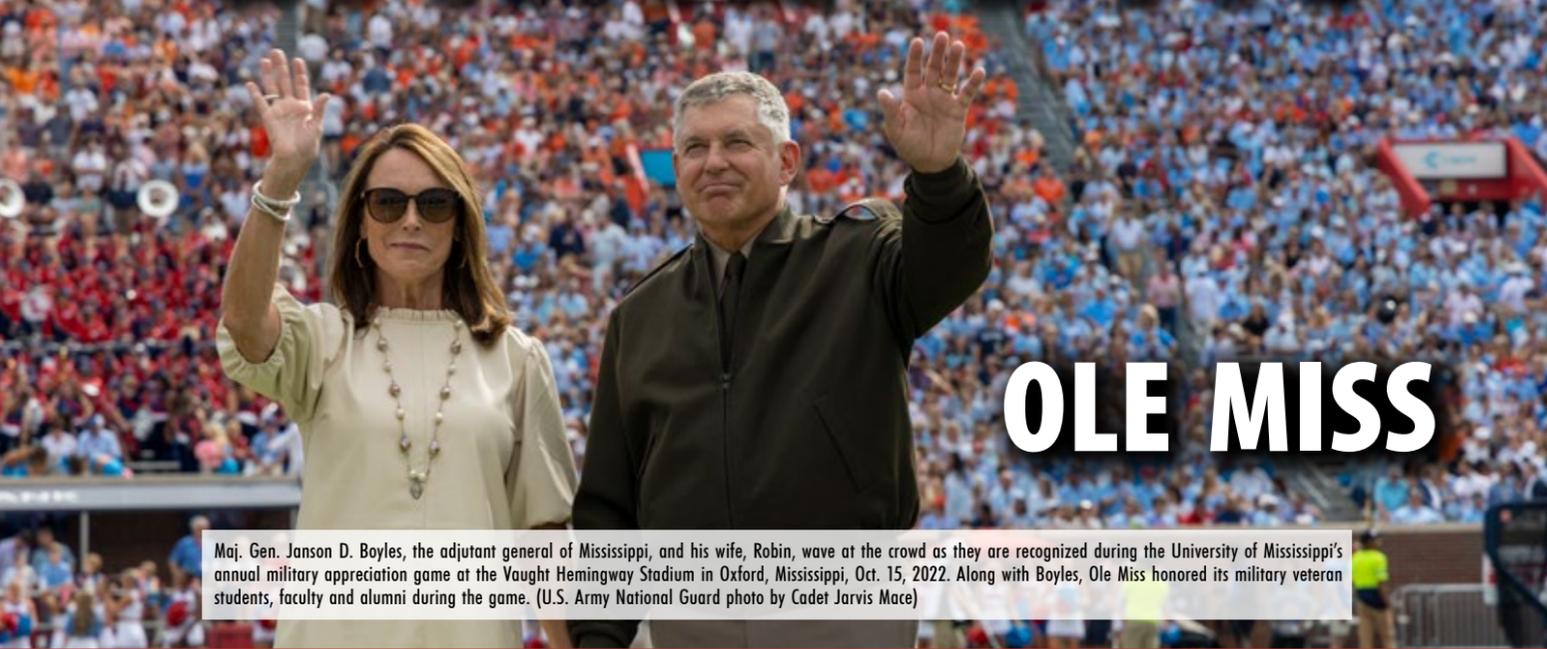
than I imagined when I broke down my mental barriers. I wouldn't trade it for anything. It was the hardest thing I've ever done but the most beneficial."

Byrd graduated from Ranger School, July 15, 2022, during a ceremony on Hurley Hill – the Ranger training area overlooking Victory Pond, aptly named as the location where graduates receive the coveted black and gold tab, are called Rangers for the first time, and serves as the finish line for the annual Best Ranger Competition.

"It got rough and there were days I wanted to quit. I told myself, 'I'll quit tomorrow'. If you can tell yourself to wait another day, you'll be alright. You'll make it."

Byrd is now a medical instructor at Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center, where he enjoys teaching new Soldiers to be Combat Medics and continues to maintain optimal physical fitness.

# GAME DAY

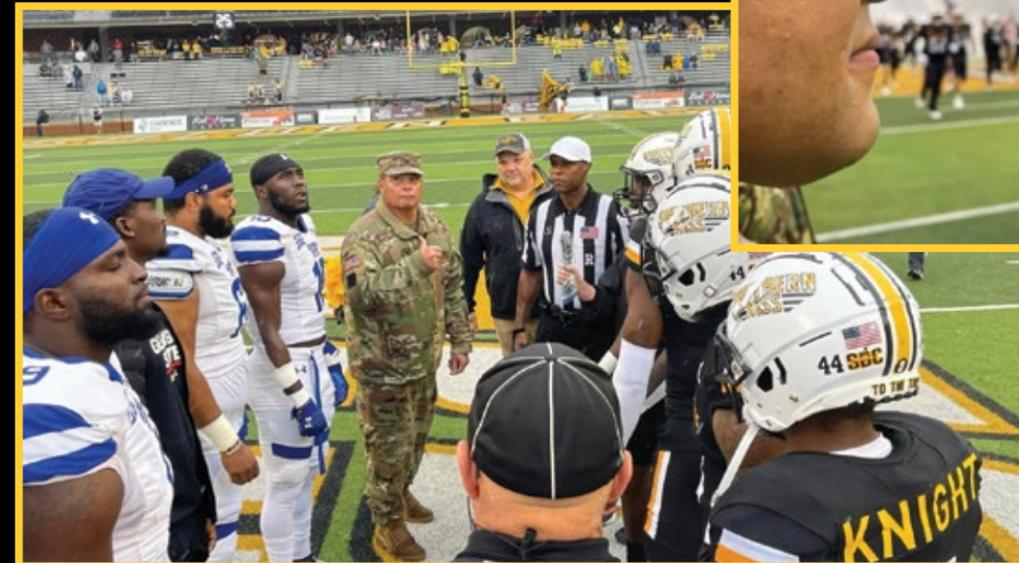


## OLE MISS

Maj. Gen. Janson D. Boyles, the adjutant general of Mississippi, and his wife, Robin, wave at the crowd as they are recognized during the University of Mississippi's annual military appreciation game at the Vaught Hemingway Stadium in Oxford, Mississippi, Oct. 15, 2022. Along with Boyles, Ole Miss honored its military veteran students, faculty and alumni during the game. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Cadet Jarvis Mace)

# SOUTHERN MISS

Col. Rick Weaver, commander of Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center, performs the coin toss during a military appreciation game at the University of Southern Mississippi, Nov. 5, 2022. Service members and veterans from all branches of service were recognized during the halftime event. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Maj. Jeremy Longmire)



A Soldier with the Mississippi Army National Guard watches the field during a military appreciation football game at the University of Southern Mississippi, Nov. 5, 2022. Service members and veterans from all branches of service were recognized during the halftime event. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Maj. Jeremy Longmire)

Cadets with Jackson State's Reserve Officer Training Corps do push-ups on the football field at Mississippi Veterans Memorial Stadium in Jackson, Mississippi, Oct. 29, 2022. The cadets did push-ups whenever Jackson State University scored a touchdown during ESPN's College GameDay event featuring the Jackson State Tigers vs. Southern University Jaguars. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Paul Byrne)



(Left) A Cadet with Jackson State's Reserve Officer Training Corps, alongside Soldiers of 2d Battalion, 20th Special Forces Group, Mississippi Army National Guard, delivers the game ball at Mississippi Veterans Memorial Stadium in Jackson, Mississippi, Oct. 29, 2022. They were there for ESPN's College GameDay event featuring the Jackson State Tigers vs. Southern University Jaguars. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Paul Byrne)



## JACKSON STATE

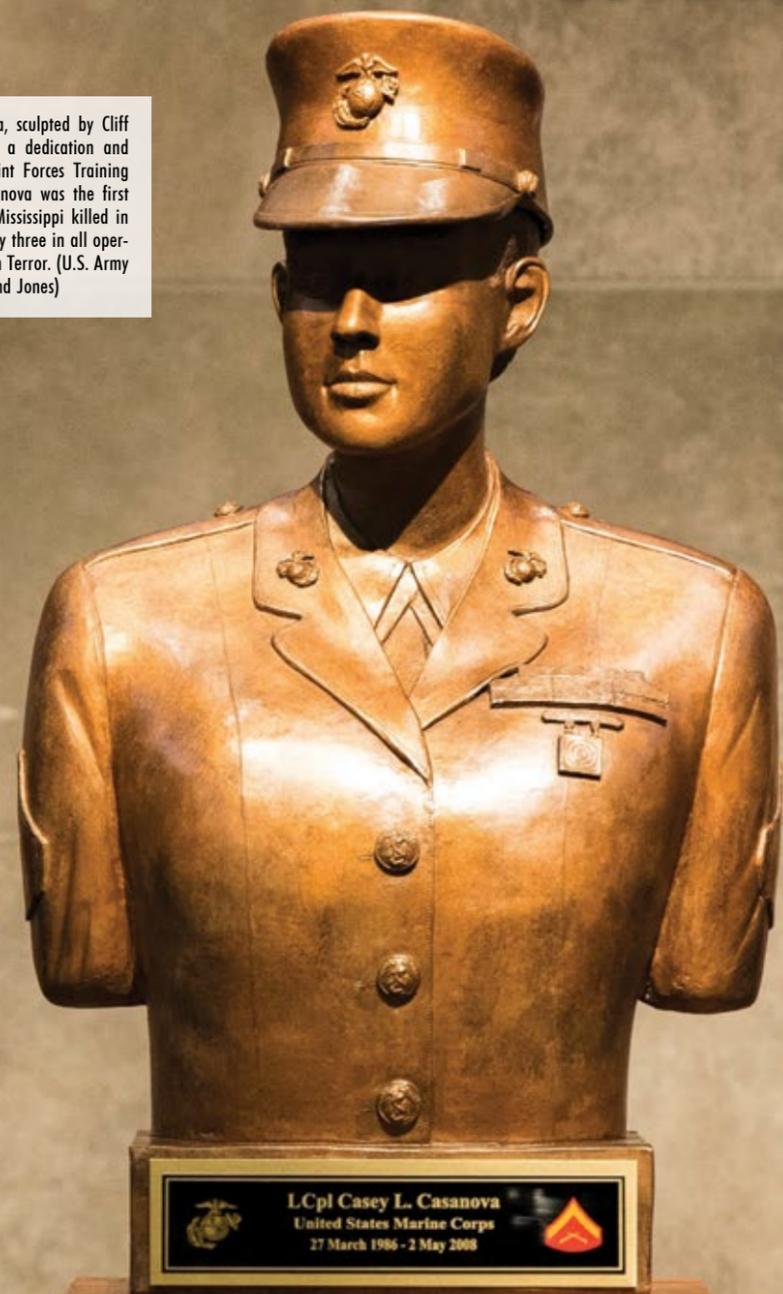
# MISSISSIPPI STATE



The 186th Air Refueling Wing was proud to be a part of the Military Appreciation game held at Mississippi State University's Davis Wade Stadium, Nov 12, 2022. The event is held annually where members of all military branches are recognized for their service. (U.S. Air National Guard photo by Tech Sgt. Justin Brown)

# HONORING THE FALLEN: LANCE CPL. CASEY CASANOVA

A bust of Lance Cpl. Casey L. Casanova, sculpted by Cliff Leonard of Florida, is unveiled during a dedication and unveiling ceremony at Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center, Mississippi, Nov. 10, 2022. Casanova was the first and only female service member from Mississippi killed in Operation Iraqi Freedom, and one of only three in all operations during the extensive Global War on Terror. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by 2nd Lt. Desmond Jones)



Story by 2nd Lt. Desmond Jones  
Camp Shelby Public Affairs Office

A brave Marine sacrificed her life to defend the freedom of her country in the Global War on Terrorism. Despite the conflicts and op-tempo of the war, it was said that one could guarantee to see a bright smile on her face and positive attitude from this Marine. Her name was Lance Cpl. Casey L. Casanova.

Casanova was the first and only female service member from Mississippi killed in Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF), and one of only three Mississippi women in all operations during the extensive Global War on Terrorism. Casanova, a native of McComb, was honored in a dedication and unveiling ceremony at the Mississippi Armed Forces Museum, Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center, Mississippi, Nov. 10, 2022 – the Marine Corps’ 247th birthday.

“Casey was very sad about the conditions for the women in the country she was serving,” said Paula Caruth, Gold Star Mother of Casanova. Caruth explained how Casanova reminded her how thankful she was for life back home.

Seeing the treatment of the locals during OIF influenced Casanova to join a program to help the women in that country. Following her passing, Cliff Leonard, a Marine Corps Vietnam veteran and a Jacksonville, Florida sculptor known for sculpting fallen service members, sculpted a bust to honor Casanova.

“It’s always moving and emotional for me because I know they lost a loved one, just like I lost some of my friends in Vietnam,” said Leonard. “You just don’t get over that and I just want them to have something that they can touch.”

Leonard expressed that the sculpted piece was intended to remind the family, friends and loved ones of Casanova and her bravery and commitment to the United States Marine Corps.

Casanova’s memory touched every person in attendance at the ceremony, ending with an old clip of her singing, “Jesus, Take the Wheel” by Carrie Underwood during her deployment.

Casanova’s exhibit and sculpture is now open to the public at the Mississippi Armed Forces Museum.



Paula Caruth (center), mother of Lance Cpl. Casey Casanova, stands next to a bust with Casanova’s comrades during a dedication and unveiling ceremony at Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center, Mississippi, Nov. 10, 2022. Casanova was the first and only female service member from Mississippi killed during Operation Iraqi Freedom, and one of only three from Mississippi in all operations during the extensive Global War on Terror. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by 2nd Lt. Desmond Jones)

# THREE BROTHERS: THREE SERGEANTS MAJOR



From left, Brent Coleman, William Coleman, and Ron Coleman stand together during a deployment to the Middle East in 2010. By 2019, all three had achieved the rank of sergeant major. (Courtesy Photo)

Story by Staff Sgt. Connie Jones  
JFH-MS Public Affairs Office

Seated at his desk, Command Sgt. Maj. Jonathan “Brent” Coleman took a big sip of coffee and offered some to the others in the room. Plaques hung from the walls, boasting his many military accomplishments. His brother, Sgt. Maj. William “Mark” Coleman, declined the offer for coffee and found a seat on a couch by the window. The two brothers fell into an easy conversation about family matters and children, switching gears to Mississippi Army National Guard

operations as casually as if they were talking about their favorite sports team.

Brent and Mark are part of a unique trio of brothers who have earned the rank of sergeant major.

The family had humble beginnings in Fulton, Mississippi. Their parents, Billy and Betty Coleman, made a quiet life for the family of six and maintained active roles in church. Their father, a Navy veteran, worked as a store manager for many years before settling into what would become a 24-year-long career as a postman for Itawamba Community College. Their mother also found employment at the college as an accounts payable clerk, retiring after 32 years and becoming the church secretary.

The Coleman Brothers had a few military influences throughout their childhood.

“We had several WWII veterans in our neighborhood,” said Brent. “We had Mr. Foster, Mr. Mills, and Mr. Holland. These men were our heroes not necessarily because we heard them tell their stories but because we would hear other people tell their stories.”

Their brother Ron, the oldest, enlisted in the MSNG in 1982, at the age of 20. His younger brothers, Mark being 12 and Brent, who was 10 at the time, looked up to him with a desire to wear the uniform one day.

“We would steal his gear when he first got in, wearing the field jackets and

things when it was cool,” said Mark.

Once they were old enough, they enlisted for a set of gear of their own. All of them began at the unit near their home.

“We all started out at [Detachment 1, Headquarters Company, 1st Battalion, 198th Armor], which was the armor battalion back then, in Fulton,” said Brent. “At one time, we were all in the Mortar platoon [together].”

Mark chose college shortly into his enlistment with the intention of becoming a commissioned officer through the Reserve Officer Training Corps at the University of Southern Mississippi. The needs of the country led him in a different direction.

“I had a 3.5 or 3.6 grade point average my first semester at USM,” said Mark. “We were pulled out of school for Desert Storm/Desert Shield in 1990 and went to Fort Hood to mobilize. We didn’t end up deploying but I had lost interest by the time we came back from Fort Hood. I ended up finishing my bachelor’s degree later while we were working [Active Guard Reserve]. I just as well could’ve been sitting here as an officer but I’m glad things turned out the way they did.”

Ron went to college to pursue nursing. He has specialized in trauma care for 30 years.

As for Brent, he began playing football at a junior college and excelled at physical training in the military.

The brothers moved through every Mississippi Army National Guard major subordinate command during their careers, including the 155th Armored Brigade Combat Team, where they spent the majority of their time. They also spent time in the overhead units at Camp Shelby and Camp McCain. Brent and Mark climbed the AGR ranks while Ron maintained a traditional Guardsman role and earned the rank of sergeant major in 2001.

In 2010, they were all deployed to the Middle East at the same time.

“I was in Northern Iraq in Tal Afar and they were at Camp Spiker in Tikrit, Iraq, so we were all over there at the same time,” Brent said. “Our oldest brother was still in at the time. He was the [1st Battalion, 98th Cavalry Regiment] command sergeant major. I was the acting first sergeant with what was then Troop A, 1-230th Air Cavalry Squadron. Mark was the master gunner with the 155th ABCT.”

Brent achieved the rank of sergeant major in 2015, working as the logistics (G4) sergeant major for the MSARNG at the United States Property and Fiscal Office (USPFO) in Flowood. In early 2022, he was selected as the land component command sergeant major of the MSNG.

“I tried to figure out the best way to do every job I’ve had or the best possible solution to help my Soldiers, whether I was readiness NCO or supply sergeant or any other position,” he said. “I’m the state log sergeant major and the land component command sergeant major part-time. It’s never part time when you work for a one-star general though,” he joked.

Brent said his newest role gives him the opportunity to help more Guardsmen at one time.

Mark earned his current rank in 2019 and serves as the operations sergeant major for 66th Troop Command.

“In my job, I concentrate a lot on military education for the enlisted and officers in 66th Troop Command. I also focus on the general systems that we have and making sure our shop understands them. At this level, I’m the senior enlisted full-time guy so I’m like the mentor for the AGR Soldiers in Troop Command.”

The closeness between siblings is apparent when they speak of one another.

“Nobody is more dedicated to his Soldiers or the MSNG,” said Mark, speaking of his younger brother. “He



A plaque of all three brothers’ sergeant major rank sits at their parents’ home in Itawamba County. (Photo by Teresa Blake, The Itawamba County Times)

**“I’VE WORKED WITH ALL OF THEM AND THE ONE THING THAT ALL THREE OF THE COMMAND SERGEANTS MAJOR COLEMANS HAVE IN COMMON IS THAT THEY ARE ALL VERY PASSIONATE ABOUT SOLDIERS AND THE WELL-BEING OF SOLDIERS”**

**- COL. BOBBY GINN**

gives his all to every job he’s ever done. He is also a man of integrity. When he became land component CSM, that was a good thing for the state. And that’s not just because he’s my brother; that’s because he’ll definitely make sure we’re taken care of.”

Brent said that he would describe his brother Mark as patient and intelligent.

“Mark is the kind of guy who sits back,” Brent said. “If you go into a room and 100 people are talking, Mark’s not going to be one of them. He’s gonna [sic] hear what everybody in the room’s saying and by the time everyone is done putting in their input, Mark’s already got it all added up. He will finally comment and everyone’s like, ‘Yeah, that’s the right way to go.’”

Of their brother Ron, who retired in 2015 after more than 30 years of military service, the two agreed that he exuded leadership qualities that they’d admired since childhood.

“He was a hands-on leader,” Brent said. “He really cared. He would learn about his people and work with them. He will bend over backwards for people and talk

to Soldiers all night if they need it.” Many can vouch for the qualities of the Coleman brothers.

“I’ve worked with all of them and the one thing that all three of the Command Sergeants Major Colemans have in common is that they are all very passionate about Soldiers and the well-being of Soldiers,” said Col. Bobby Ginn, the director of logistics (G4) for the Mississippi Army National Guard.

While they are related through blood, they feel that the MSNG has also provided them with a close family that helped to raise them and in turn, they were able to mentor others.

“This is a brotherhood that we’ve built,” said Brent. “It’s more than just these three brothers. It comes down to love. I’ve got over 30 years’ worth of friendships. Kids getting in now, I know their dad or mom or their uncle. That’s the good thing about the Guard. Knowing the people you work with makes it more of a family and people want to help their family. I think that’s why we succeed.”

**“WE WOULD STEAL HIS GEAR WHEN HE FIRST GOT IN, WEARING THE FIELD JACKETS AND THINGS WHEN IT WAS COOL”**

**- SGT. MAJ. MARK COLEMAN**



Col. William "Lee" Henry, incoming commander of Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center, holds the unit colors during a change of command ceremony held in Dolton Hall at CSJFTC, Mississippi, Dec. 1, 2022. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by 2nd Lt. Desmond Jones)



Maj. Gen. Janson D. Boyles (left), the adjutant general of Mississippi, stands with Col. Rick Weaver, commander of Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center, Mississippi Army National Guard, during a change of command ceremony held in Dolton Hall at CSJFTC, Mississippi, Dec. 1, 2022. Weaver was awarded the Meritorious Service Medal for his excellent service to Camp Shelby. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by 2nd Lt. Desmond Jones)

# CAMP SHELBY WELCOMES NEW COMMANDER

Story by 2nd Lt. Desmond Jones  
Camp Shelby Public Affairs Office

Col. William "Lee" Henry assumed authority as the new commander of Camp Shelby Joint Forces Training Center Dec. 1, 2022, during a change of command ceremony in Dolton Hall. Henry previously served as the J3, Director of Military Support for the Mississippi National Guard at the Joint Force Headquarters in Jackson, Mississippi. As the former Director of Military Support, Henry brings his expertise and knowledge of contingency planning to state and federal operations.

"It's very important that the person who takes the mantle of this great installation is prepared and has the knowledge to know how to manage this type of installation," said Maj. Gen. Janson D. Boyles, the adjutant general of Mississippi.

The historical installation has seen many great leaders who have fully managed it. It takes a unique kind of leader to be able to command and control the installation, with

it being a joint environment for all sectors of the Department of Defense.

"We have a great leader that we're about to honor, and you're going to do a great job with Camp Shelby, Mississippi," said Boyles. "You know this place well; you're from here, and I know that you're going to do a great job as we tackle the challenges of what the next mobilization platform looks like as we build our training with a vigorous reserve footprint at Camp Shelby."

Henry not only brings his military experience to his newly appointed position, but he also brings relationships he has established over the years from the University of Southern Mississippi, and Forrest and Lamar counties. Camp Shelby's mission statement is "To be the premier integrated warfighting and force generation installation while serving as the world-class center of excellence for installation management, customer service, and community partnering." So, as a commander, having and establishing good networking relationships, particularly

at Camp Shelby, brings a huge amount of assets and resources to the Mississippi National Guard.

"It's been an honor to serve as the 36th commander alongside an outstanding team of service members and civilian staff," said Col. Rick Weaver, the outgoing commander. Weaver passed the torch to Henry as he assumed the duties as the Construction and Facilities Management Officer for the Mississippi National Guard. His leadership and service to the soldiers and civilians of Camp Shelby will truly be missed.

Camp Shelby is one of the largest state-owned National Guard training sites in the nation and a force multiplier statewide and federally with its joint training capabilities. The motto, "Soldiers First!" continues to forge ahead, and the new commander aims to keep the installation a premier joint forces training center welcoming military forces and federal agencies from across the state and nation.

# MSNG HURRICANE IAN RESPONSE



Tech. Sgt. Benjamin Rivera Ortiz, cyber defense operations craftsman - networks operations assigned to the 255th Air Control Squadron, Mississippi Air National Guard, inspects equipment at a tactical operations center in Lehigh Acres, Florida, Oct. 4, 2022. The 255th is deployed to south Florida to respond to the devastation of Hurricane Ian. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Jovi Prevot)

Story by Mr. Daniel Szarek  
MSNG Deputy Director of Public Affairs

Approximately 20 Soldiers and Airmen of the Mississippi National Guard (MSNG) successfully completed an emergency response mission in Florida, Oct. 6, 2022. The Guardsmen left Mississippi Sept. 29 for a week-long deployment in support of the Florida National Guard (FLNG), the Florida Division of Emergency Management, and local civil and emergency response personnel during Hurricane Ian relief efforts in the vicinity of Fort Myers.

Mississippi Gov. Tate Reeves approved an Emergency Management Assistance Compact (EMAC) request Sept. 28 for MSNG assistance in response and recovery operations in Florida following Hurricane Ian's destructive path across the state.

Eleven Mississippi Army National Guard (MSARNG) Soldiers from Company B, 1st Battalion, 111th Aviation Regiment, based in Meridian, used two CH-47 Chinook helicopters to provide heavy helicopter support to the FLNG Aviation teams through passenger and cargo transport, search and rescue operations, and evacuation of stranded citizens from the isolated islands of Sanibel, Captiva, and Pine.

"Mississippi Aviation has always stood ready to assist our neighboring states during their times of need," said Col. Bradley Howe, state army aviation officer for the MSARNG. "Our Chinook unit

has a special connection to Florida since the other half of their company is located in Jacksonville."

Company B, with just two helicopters and 11 Soldiers, completed more than 37 flight hours, transported nearly 250 passengers, and moved more than 102,000 pounds of cargo in just five days of operations.

"The team that participated in the Hurricane Ian response is highly experienced and trained to accomplish any mission that Florida needed," said Howe. "They performed to high standards and showed Florida residents and state agencies some of our Mississippi hospitality."

Members of the Mississippi Air National Guard's 255th Air Control Squadron (ACS), based in Gulfport, also deployed to provide technical communication support to state and local emergency services and military organizations from their tactical operations center in Lehigh Acres, Florida. The Airmen were tasked with supporting 3rd Battalion, 116th Field Artillery Regiment, Florida Army National Guard, using their expertise in the Joint Incident Site Communications Capability (JISCC).

"The JISCC provides internet, Wi-Fi, Land Mobile Radio, and VOIP [Voice over Internet Protocol] phone connectivity in austere environments," said Lt. Col. Jeff Kirby, commander of the 255th ACS. "The invaluable communications support enabled the 3-116th to conduct security operations, Point of Distribution sites, traffic control,

and search and rescue operations."

The 255th has extensive experience in operating communications capability systems during natural disaster response and relief efforts throughout the South, and regularly respond at the drop of a hat.

"As with Hurricane Ida in 2021, the 255th ACS again deployed at a moment's notice to provide irreplaceable communications expertise during hurricane response efforts in a neighboring state," said Col. Lee Henry, director of military support for the Mississippi National Guard. "For two years in a row, the Airmen of the 255th have been called upon to re-establish life-sustaining communications in devastated areas, which they have done masterfully."

Interagency coordination between the Florida Division of Emergency Management, the Mississippi Emergency Management Agency, the office of Mississippi Gov. Tate Reeves, as well as the Florida and Mississippi National Guard, played a vital role in the rapid deployment of military support to devastated areas of Florida.

"Mississippi is often impacted by natural disasters, and in those tough times, we rely on support from our brothers and sisters-in-arms for aid," Kirby said. "The men and women of the 255th Air Control Squadron are proud to support domestic operations in Mississippi and our neighboring state partners through the Emergency Management Assistance Compact."



Lisa Bullard, a member of the Miami-Dade Fire Rescue - Florida Task Force 1, comforts her dog, Phish, aboard a CH-47 Chinook helicopter assigned to Company B, 1st Battalion, 111th Aviation Regiment, Mississippi Army National Guard, above Fort Myers, Florida, Oct. 4, 2022. The 111th is deployed to south Florida to respond to the devastation of Hurricane Ian. (U.S. Army National Guard photo by Sgt. Jovi Prevot)

# 186TH AIR REFUELING WING FAMILY DAY



Story by Airman 1st Class Angelina Stokes  
186th Airlift Wing Public Affairs Office

The 186th Air Refueling Wing hosted Family Day 2022, an annual event to show appreciation to Airmen's families, at Key Field Air National Guard Base, Dec. 3, 2022.

"Our airmen's families play a critical role in supporting their loved ones throughout the year," said Col. Cynthia Smith, 186th Air Refueling Wing commander. "We

simply would not be able to accomplish our mission without their support."

Several hundred people gathered in the base maintenance hangar where activities were offered such as games and bounce houses, and KC-135R, RC-26, and C-17 aircraft were on display. Firetrucks, guns, and other military vehicles were also available for viewing.

Participants signed Christmas cards for veterans who reside in the veterans nursing home and Veterans Administration Hospital. Santa Claus rode in on a Key

Field firetruck and visited with children.

Several volunteers from Key Field ANGB worked to organize this special event with a goal of saying thank you to the many sons, daughters, parents, grandparents and others who sacrifice so guard members can perform their military duty throughout the year.

(U.S. Air National Guard photos by Tech. Sgt. Jessica Hulbert and Airman 1st Class Dakota Straight)

# DUTCH FLYERS MEMORIAL

The Mississippi Armed Forces Museum hosted the 2022 Commencement & Memorial Ceremony for the Royal Netherlands Military Flying School at Cedarlawn Cemetery in Jackson, Mississippi, Sept. 16, 2022. The ceremony is hosted annually to honor Dutch military personnel who passed away during training accidents while in Jackson attending the Royal Netherlands Military Flying School from 1942 to 1944. The school was established as a response to German occupation of the Netherlands in 1940 and trained attendees to be pilots and aircrew. Section 41 of the Cedarlawn Cemetery was ceded by Jackson city government to the Netherlands for their casualties to be buried in Dutch soil.

(U.S. Air National Guard photo by Staff Sgt. Jared Bounds)



# WORLD CHAMPION POWERLIFTER

Story by Staff Sgt. Frank Schatzman  
1108th Aviation Group

Through dedication and discipline, Staff Sgt. Andrew Linch, 1108th Aviation Group, Mississippi Army National Guard, competed and became a two-time powerlifting world champion. It all started with just a love and passion for weightlifting at the age of 16 and powerlifting at 22.

In October 2020, Linch placed first at the Southern Elite Classic Power Lifting meet. At the National Powerlifting Championship in 2021, Linch again placed first in his weight class and third place among all competitors. This performance caught the eye of the United States Powerlifting Association (USPA) where Team USA offered him an opportunity to represent the country at the invitation only



2021 International Powerlifting League (IPL) World Championship in Coventry, England.

In November 2021, Linch won gold in his weight class at the IPL World Championship

and set a new state squat record, squatting 606 lbs. Linch also finished in the top three out of 93 competitors, deeming him the 3rd strongest powerlifter in the world, pound-for-pound.

Linch broke his deadlift and total state records again in March 2022, but this time at the Maveriq Mayhem Powerlifting competition in Millbrook, Alabama. He then competed at the IPL World Championship in October 2022, in Orange Beach, Alabama, where he again won his weight class.

"Success is uncompromised integrity." This quote goes along with any aspect of life but specifically with my training and nutrition leading up to these competitions," said Linch. "Do the right thing even when no one is looking, and you'll be successful."

# MSGNG CELEBRATES 10 YEARS WITH UZBEKISTAN

Story by Lt. Col. Deidre D. Smith  
MSGNG Director of Public Affairs

Mississippi and the Republic of Uzbekistan celebrated their 10th Anniversary in the National Guard Bureau's State Partnership Program during a reception at the Embassy of Uzbekistan in Washington, D.C., Dec. 12, 2022.

"We greatly cherish our partnership with Mississippi that for the past years has grown and expanded as never before," said Vladimir Norov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Uzbekistan. "It started with a mutual desire to enhance military to military partnership."

The NGB State Partnership Program is a Department of Defense security cooperation program that establishes a military relationship between a State's National Guard and a partner country's military forces.

"In the past 10 years, we have conducted 200 partnership engagements together through key leader meetings, military-to-military exchanges, exercises, celebrations, military ceremonies, and virtual events," said Maj. Gen. Janson D. Boyles, the adjutant general of Mississippi. "I am grateful for our steadfast partnership with Uzbekistan and the Mississippi National Guard looks forward to continuing our



Vladimir Norov, Minister of Foreign Affairs of Uzbekistan, presents a gift of celebration to Maj. Gen. Janson D. Boyles, adjutant general of Mississippi, commemorating 10 years of successful partnership during the anniversary celebration in Washington D.C., Dec. 12, 2022. (Courtesy Photo)

partnership and building relationships for many more decades to come."

The partnership has included various subject matter expert exchanges, key leader engagements, bilateral conferences, as well as multiple partnerships between universities in Mississippi and Uzbekistan. The leaders and troops of Uzbekistan significantly contributed and participated in joint exercises including Southern Strike, Patriot South, Ardent Sentry, and Best Warrior Competitions.

"In 2022, the Mississippi National Guard's State Partnership Program reached new levels of success and recognition by receiving 'Partnership of the Year First Runner-Up' by Gen. Daniel Hokanson [Chief of the National Guard Bureau]," said Lt. Col. Amanda Villeret, director of the Mississippi State Partnership Program. "We look forward to expanding our foreign partners' participation in Mississippi-hosted exercises in 2023."



# 41ST ARMY BAND ACCEPTING AUDITIONS



The 41st Army Band is Mississippi's own Army National Guard Band. We are looking for qualified musicians to join our ranks and perform in a variety of musical ensembles. Musicians in the 41st Army Band perform around the state and nationally, receiving great training and benefits while still engaged in their civilian careers and college. Army musicians have the unique ability to serve the country and state through their passion for music.

FOR QUESTIONS OR TO SET UP  
AN AUDITION, PLEASE  
SCAN THE QR CODE



 **41st Army Band** 



FOR ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS OR TO SET UP AN AUDITION  
PLEASE REACH OUT TO OUR BAND RECRUITER  
SSG SHELBI CONSTANCIO: (601) 493-7308



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